

dust and desolation. It is as if
 rhinoceroses had done
 battle on one's favourite rose-bed; only a
 rhinoceros
 would.

These doubts of the benefits of criticism
 lead naturally
 to another: the question of criticism in
 education, and
 the teaching of taste. One may ask whether
 the critical
 mania of the age has not sown here too its
 tares; leading
 us to try to make the young critical instead
 of cultivated.
 I doubt if taste can to any extent be taught
 directly; and
 I doubt still more if the way to teach it is to
 lecture
 people on such matters as why bad poetry
 is bad, and
 silly judgements silly. It is too negative—like
 thinking it
 necessary to lecture children on the
 childishness of dolls
 and lollipops; surely they may be left to grow
 out of them.
 Adult interests will catch their attention,
 and they will
 quietly put away childish things. So with
 literature; we
 can only put its best things in the path of
 the young, and
 trust to its beauty working on them as
 Nature's beauty
 on "Wordsworth's Lucy. I would far rather a
 young man
 spent his time reading *The Earthly Paradise*
 on his back in,
 a punt (I do not say he could not do better)
 than stewing
 over critical periodicals. How far, indeed,
 English Literature
 should be *taught* in Universities is still
 an open ques-
 tion. In schools it must be, for the sake of
 the children
 of the Philistines. But when it comes to
 lectures to young
 men on something as difficult and delicate

as taste, I
remember with apprehension the man in
Tchekov who
must needs teach his kitten how to catch
mice; with the
only result that it fled ever after at the sight
of one. In the
same way Lord Chesterfield, after long
years of letters
and lectures on 'the Graces', produced a
young man who
ate gooseberries at a dinner-party out of the
dish. Lec-
tures on literature are terribly apt to
become like char4-
banc trips to Grasmere. 'The dons', said
Samuel Butler,